



Kindergarten Practitioner

Candidate Information Pack

Telephone: 01206 572544 Email: careers@stmaryscolchester.org.uk

Website: www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies



Dear Applicants,

Thank you for your interest in St Mary's School.

Founded in 1908 by the Bilson sisters, St Mary's has been educating girls from Colchester and the surrounding area for well over a century. As we approach our 120th anniversary in 2028, we are proud of our heritage and ambitious for the next phase of the school's development.

From its earliest days, St Mary's has been shaped by a bold conviction: that girls deserve an education rooted in scholarship, confidence and character. That founding vision remains central to who we are today. Our task now is to honour that inheritance while sharpening our distinctiveness as an academically ambitious school, where curiosity, high expectations and a love of learning matter deeply.

Since joining St Mary's, I have been struck by the strength of the community: the professionalism of staff, the quality of relationships and the genuine care shown to every girl. These are powerful foundations on which to build. Our aspiration is straightforward but demanding: to be a school known equally for warmth and scholarship; a place where pastoral care and academic ambition are not competing ideas, but mutually reinforcing strengths.

We are ambitious for our pupils and for our staff. At St Mary's, we are committed to providing a rigorous and engaging education, alongside strong pastoral care and a breadth of opportunity that enables every girl to thrive. We believe girls flourish when academic challenge is ambitious, joyful and unapologetically serious. Central to this is our belief that excellent teaching, rich challenge and strong relationships transform outcomes. We want pupils to think deeply, grow in confidence and character, and leave us not only with strong outcomes, but with curiosity, courage and a lifelong love of learning.

For colleagues, this creates a rare professional opportunity. We are looking for people who care deeply about scholarship and the craft of teaching; colleagues who share our ambition, are committed to their own professional growth, and want to contribute to a collaborative culture shaped by innovation, collegiality and high standards. This is an important and exciting moment to join the school. We are entering a significant phase of development and, for the right candidate, this is not simply an opportunity to take up a post, but to help shape an important chapter in the life of a distinctive girls' school.

There is much here to value, and much to build. If that sense of purpose resonates with you, I hope you will consider joining us.

With best wishes,

Lee Daniel Faith
Principal

The school

St Mary's is an Independent day school in Colchester, Essex for girls age 3-16 and boys age 3-4.

Our vision is to empower girls to thrive at school and beyond.

The Lower School was ranked 12th highest performing Preparatory Schools in England by the Sunday Times last year. Many girls achieve scholarships to senior school and we have an impressive 11+ pass rate for those who choose to sit the exam. At the Senior School, excellent GCSE results are achieved each year. We're able to achieve such success by tailoring the education to suit the needs of each individual in our small classes and by giving the girls the encouragement and support they need to aim high.

We are strong believers that success in life comes from more than just impressive exam results. At St Mary's we offer a brilliantly balanced education in order to develop exceptionally well-rounded individuals. With a huge variety of clubs, enrichment activities, music and drama productions, visits and international travel experiences on offer, there's ample opportunity to learn new skills and develop talents. There are numerous positions of responsibility available to the girls which help develop their leadership skills, and we foster team spirit through initiatives such as the School Council and School Houses.

For young people to thrive we firmly believe they must feel confident, relaxed and secure. Every child is known and understood and the girls feel comfortable challenging themselves and asking questions.

We believe in instilling the values of respect and courtesy, and through our charity and outreach work the students develop a strong sense of community. We are a leading Eco School and the students get a strong sense of caring for the environment as a result. As a global member of the Round Square Organisation, those who attend St Mary's benefit from our international links, which helps to broaden their horizons.

In this positive environment our young people develop the strength of character and the self-belief they need to make the very most of the life that lies ahead.



Why Kindergarten at St Mary's

At St Mary's, we believe that the foundations of confidence, curiosity and belonging are laid in the earliest years. Our Kindergarten plays a decisive role in shaping children's first experiences of school, learning and belonging. It is where relationships are formed, trust is built and a love of learning begins. We know that when children are known well, cared for well and supported well in their early years, they are far more likely to flourish throughout their education.

Kindergarten Practitioners at St Mary's are therefore central to the school's mission. Their work underpins children's emotional security, language development, social confidence and early learning habits, all of which are essential for successful transition into the Lower School and beyond. The Kindergarten Practitioner is a highly valued member of the school community, playing a pivotal role in delivering outstanding Early Years education and care. Working closely with the Early Years team, the role involves creating a safe, inclusive and engaging environment in which every child can thrive.

This role goes far beyond care alone. Kindergarten Practitioners at St Mary's are key to:

- building strong, trusting relationships with children and families
- supporting early communication, social development and independence
- observing children carefully and responding thoughtfully to individual needs
- contributing to early identification and support for children with additional needs
- fostering curiosity, resilience and a sense of belonging through play-based learning

Practitioners work collaboratively to ensure high-quality provision and smooth transitions, particularly as children prepare to move into school. They also play a crucial role in embedding the school's values from the very start of a child's educational journey.

The Kindergarten Practitioner role is fundamental to the success of the whole school. By establishing strong foundations in the early years, practitioners help ensure the girls arrive in the Lower School ready to learn, confident in themselves and secure in their place within the school community.

We are seeking a practitioner who understands that early years education is both a privilege and a responsibility; someone who is reflective, nurturing and committed to inclusive practice. The successful candidate will recognise the impact of their work not just on individual children, but on the long-term culture and flourishing of the school.

This is an opportunity to be part of a thoughtful, ambitious and caring school, and to make a lasting difference at the very beginning of each child's educational journey.



Job description

Job title:	Kindergarten Practitioner (Level 3)
Reporting to:	1) Kindergarten Manager, 2) Vice Principal
Hours:	Full-time, year round, Monday - Friday between 7:30am and 6:00pm. Hours are flexible during those days to meet the needs of the post
Start Date	As soon as possible OR 1st September 2026
Salary:	£27,435 per annum

General Provisions

The particular duties assigned to this post are set out below. These may be reviewed and amended in consultation with the post holder in the light of any changes in the requirements and priorities within the school. Such duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level or responsibility entailed within it.

Whilst every effort has been made to explain the main duties and responsibilities of the post, each individual task may not have been identified; therefore, employees will be expected to comply with any reasonable request from the Principal, including ad hoc projects and to undertake work of a similar level that is not specified in the job description. The job description is current at the date shown, but, in consultation with you, may be changed by the Principal to reflect or anticipate changes in the job commensurate with the grade and job title.

Purpose of the Post

- Raise the quality of early years provision, including physical, emotional, social and intellectual education and care for children in the setting
- Promote excellent practice at all times
- Support other practitioners in the skills and behaviours that safeguard and promote good outcomes for children

Key Areas

- Knowledge and understanding of the EYFS
- Effective practice
- Relationships with children
- Communicating and working in partnership with families and carers
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Continue own professional development

Knowledge and Understanding of the EYFS

- Understand the principles and content of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework and Outcomes (January 2024) and know how to put them in to practice
- Acknowledge the various influences and transitions experienced by a child from both inside and outside the setting
- Practice and promote current legal requirements, national policies and guidance on health and safety, safeguarding and promoting the well-being of children

Effective Practice

- To have high expectations of all children and to demonstrate commitment to ensuring that they can achieve their full potential
- Establish and sustain a safe, welcoming, purposeful, stimulating and encouraging environment where children feel confident and secure and are able to develop and learn
- Promote the use of informed observation and other strategies to monitor children's activity, development and progress systematically and carefully, and to use this information to inform, plan and improve practice and provision
- Plan and provide safe, appropriate, child-led and adult initiated experiences, activities and play opportunities indoor, outdoor and in out-of-setting contexts, which enable children to develop and learn
- Select, prepare and use a range of resources suitable for children's ages, interests and abilities, taking account of diversity and promoting equality and inclusion
- Actively support the development of children's language and communication skills
- Promote positive behaviour, self-control and independence through using effective behaviour management strategies and developing children's social, emotional and behavioural skills
- Promote children's rights, equality, inclusion and anti-discriminatory practice in all aspects of the setting
- Establish and maintain a safe environment and employ practices that promote children's health, safety and physical, mental and emotional well-being
- Encourage all practitioners to recognise when a child is in danger or at risk of harm and know how to act to protect them
- Support the process of effective assessment, recording and reporting on progress in children's development and learning and use this as a basis for differentiating provision
- To talk to children, giving constructive and sensitive feedback to help children understand what they have achieved and think about what they need to do next
- Maintain a positive and proactive culture amongst practitioners in being able to identify and support children whose progress, development or well-being is affected by changes or difficulties in their personal circumstances, ensuring staff know when to refer them to colleagues for specialist support

Relationships with Children

- Establish fair, respectful, trusting, supportive and constructive relationships with children, communicating sensitively and effectively with children to the end of the foundation stage
- Maintain a culture of listening to children, paying attention to what they say and valuing and respecting their views
- Ensure all staff demonstrate the positive values, attitudes and behaviour which the setting expects from the children

Premises/Health and Safety

- Maintain fair, respectful, trusting and constructive relationships with families and parents/carers, and communicate sensitively and effectively with them
- To work in partnership with parents / carers and other family members, providing formal and informal opportunities through which information about children's well-being, development and learning can be shared to improve outcomes

Teamwork and Collaboration

- Sustain a culture of collaborative and cooperative working between colleagues
- Shape the policies and practices of the setting and share in collective responsibility for their implementation
- Contribute to the work of a multi-professional team

Professional Development

- Develop and use skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology to support their work with children and wider professional activities
- Play an active role in identifying and finding ways of meeting own needs for professional development and the development needs of the setting
- Adopt a creative and innovative approach towards practice, by being open to opportunities for improvements, and to make suggestions

Other Duties

- Maintain and replenish resources in the Kindergarten environment
- To effectively record observations and assess children's next steps in learning
- Maintain standards of cleanliness and hygiene within the Kindergarten
- To provide simple First Aid
- To attend Kindergarten team meetings
- To supervise Early Morning Care and After School Care when required
- Attend staff meetings at the request of the Vice Principal/Principal
- Attend parents' evenings and open days to promote the Kindergarten and Lower School
- To undertake appropriate in-service training
- To display children's work in a variety of ways
- Any other reasonable duties as required by the Principal

Person specification

(E) = Essential
(D) = Desirable

Education/Qualifications/Knowledge

- NVQ Level 3 or above in Early Years Childcare and Education or equivalent (E)
- Valid Paediatric First Aid qualification (D)
- Evidence of Continued Career Development (E)
- GCSE Maths and English at Grade C or above (D)
- An understanding of current relevant best theory and practice (E)

Skills and Expertise

- Worked in a nursery setting involving the supervision and care of children (D)
- Induction training in a similar role, particularly covering Child Protection and Health and Safety training (D)
- Detailed knowledge of the EYFS (E)
- Able to use electronic forms of communication and other software (E)
- Proven basic administrative skills (E)
- Able to plan for the individual needs of the pupils (E)
- Able to create a well organised and stimulating learning environment (E)

Personal Qualities

- Organised, self-disciplined, reliable, conscientious and honest (E)
- Able to work within a team (E)
- Calm, professional behaviour at all times, including appropriate reactions to negative behaviour by a child (E)
- Self-motivated (E)
- Inspiring and influential (E)
- Willingness to commit to a whole school ethos (E)
- Organised (E)



Benefits

Employee Assistance Programme

Confidential 24-hour helpline
Counselling sessions
Wellness app

Meals and Refreshments

Lunch available during term-time
Paid lunch break
Tea and coffee facilities provided

Physical Health

Occupational health support
Bike2Work Scheme

Professional Development

Life and leadership coaching through the EAP
Training provided

Financial

Staff discount for School fees (subject to qualifying criteria)
Financial coaching through the EAP
Regular benchmarking of salaries
Access to BlueLight Card and other discounts
Staff uniform provided

Additional Benefits

Pleasant working grounds and location
Free parking on site
Friendly team



Our Staff Say...

“We are a friendly setting with a mix of team experience and qualities, which bring out the best in both adults and the children.”

“Each practitioner gets an opportunity to plan for a group of children so they can incorporate their own flare into the week.”

“We spend large periods of time outside where staff get to engage in the natural environment, great if you like planting and for wellbeing! We have our own forest school and outdoor learning area and the use of the school field and tennis court for our own PE sessions.”

“Continuous professional development is encouraged with a focus on forest school.”

“The friendly team is a definite benefit and not being restricted to being indoors all day.”



Application process

Closing date for applications: Wednesday 22nd July 2026

Date of interviews: On a rolling basis

Candidates should complete their application form on MyNewTerm: <https://mynewterm.com/school/St-Mary's-School-for-Girls/115394>

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact Mrs M Terry, HR & Compliance Officer at:

Email: careers@stmaryscolchester.org.uk

Post: St Mary's School, 91 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3RB

Safeguarding

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening.

Please visit www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/ to read our Application & Recruitment process explanatory notes.

Privacy notice

Please read our Privacy Notice for Job Candidates, which can be found at www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/

We respect your privacy and are committed to protecting your personal data. Our Privacy Notice will inform you as to how we look after personal data held by us and tell you about your privacy rights and how the law protects you. It is important that you read this Privacy Notice together with any other privacy notice or fair processing notice we may provide on specific occasions when we are collecting or processing personal data so that you are fully aware of how and why we are using personal data. This Privacy Notice supplements the other notices and is not intended to override them.



St Mary's
Colchester

